

**FIGURE 3-8** Destination of immigrants by source and U.S. states. California receives about one-fourth of all immigrants, with the largest numbers from Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam, and China. New York and New Jersey receive another one-fourth of immigrants, especially from the Dominican Republic. A large number of Cubans go to Florida, Mexicans to Texas, and Mexicans and Poles to Illinois.

grants to the United States who had to sail across the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean in tiny ships.

Today, motor vehicles and airplanes bring most immigrants speedily and reasonably comfortably to the United States and other countries. The major obstacles faced by most immigrants now begin only after they arrive at their desired destination. Immigrants face two major difficulties—gaining permission to enter a new country in the first place and hostile attitudes of citizens once they have entered the new country.

## Immigration Policies of Host Countries

Countries to which immigrants wish to migrate have adopted two policies to control the arrival of foreigners seeking work. The United States uses a quota system to limit the number of foreign citizens who can migrate permanently to the country and obtain work. Other major recipients of immigrants, especially in Western Europe and the Middle East, permit guest workers to work temporarily but not stay permanently.

### U.S. Quota Laws

The era of unrestricted immigration to the United States ended when Congress passed the Quota Act in 1921 and the National Origins Act in 1924. These laws established quotas, or maximum limits on the number of people who could immigrate to the United States from each country during a 1-year period. According to the quota, for each country that had native-born persons already living in the United States, 2 percent of their number (based on the 1910 census) could immigrate each year. This limited the number of immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere to 150,000 per year, virtually all of whom had to be from Europe. The system continued with minor modifications until the 1960s.

Quota laws were designed to ensure that most immigrants to the United States continued to be Europeans. Although Asians never accounted for more than 5 percent of immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Americans

were, nevertheless, alarmed at the prospect of millions of Asians flooding into the country, especially to states along the Pacific Coast.

Following passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, quotas for individual countries were eliminated in 1968 and replaced with hemisphere quotas. The annual number of U.S. immigrants was restricted to 170,000 from the Eastern Hemisphere and 120,000 from the Western Hemisphere. In 1978, the hemisphere quotas were replaced by a global quota of 290,000, including a maximum of 20,000 per country. The current law has a global quota of 620,000, with no more than 7 percent from one country, but numerous qualifications and exceptions can alter the limit considerably.

Because the number of applicants for admission to the United States far exceeds the quotas, Congress has set preferences. The current law permits up to 480,000 family-sponsored immigrants plus 140,000 employment-related immigrants, again with numerous exceptions. About three-fourths of the immigrants are admitted to reunify families, primarily spouses or unmarried children of people already living in the United States. The typical wait for a spouse to gain entry is currently about 5 years. A handful of brothers and sisters or other relatives of noncitizens are also admitted, although the chance of being selected is as slim as winning the lottery. Skilled workers and exceptionally talented professionals receive most of the remaining one-fourth of the visas. Others are admitted by lottery under a diversity category to people from countries that historically sent few people to the United States.

The quota does not apply to refugees, who are admitted if they are judged genuine refugees. Also admitted without limit are spouses, children, and parents of U.S. citizens. The number of immigrants can vary sharply from year to year, primarily because numbers in these two groups are unpredictable.

Asians have made especially good use of the priorities set by the U.S. quota laws. Many well-educated Asians enter the United States under the preference for skilled workers. Once admitted, they can bring in relatives under the family-reunification provisions of the quota. Eventually, these immigrants can bring in a wider range of other relatives from Asia, through a process of chain migration.

**BRAIN DRAIN.** Some of today's immigrants to the United States and Canada are poor people pushed from their homes by economic desperation, but most are young, well-educated people lured to economically growing countries. Scientists, researchers, doctors, and other professionals migrate to countries where they can make better use of their abilities. After earning Ph.D.s, young scholars find more teaching positions available at American universities than at home.

Other countries charge that by giving preference to skilled workers, immigration policies in the United States and Europe contribute to a **brain drain**, which is a large-scale emigration by talented people. The World Bank found that the percentage of citizens with a college education who lived abroad in 2005 was 84 percent in Haiti; 47 percent in Ghana; 45 percent in Mozambique; and 30-some percent in Kenya, Laos, Uganda, Angola, Somalia, El Salvador, and Sri Lanka.

Temporary Migration for Work

People unable to migrate permanently to a new country for employment opportunities may be allowed to migrate temporarily. Prominent forms of temporary work migrants include guest workers in Europe and the Middle East and, historically, time-contract workers in Asia.

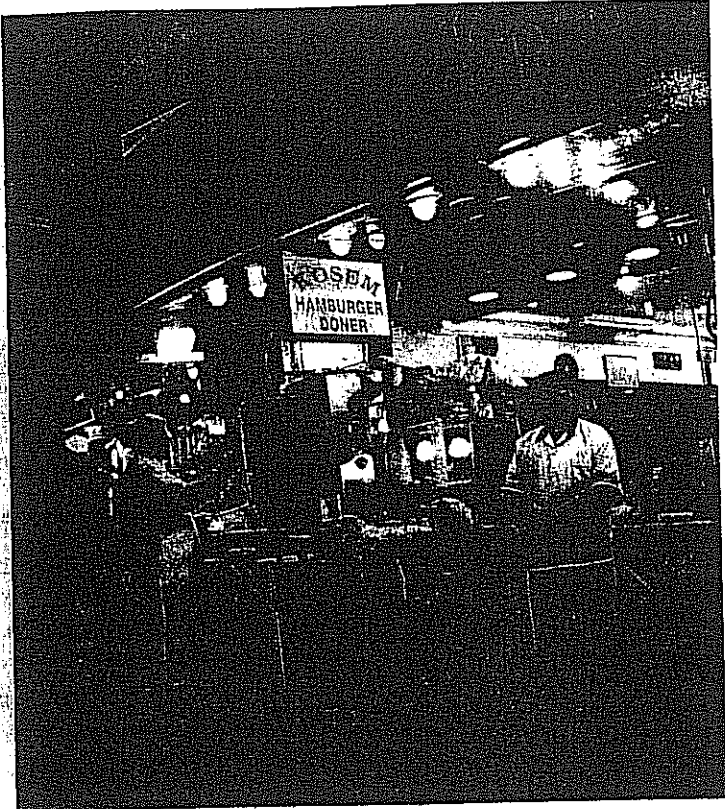
Citizens of poor countries who obtain jobs in Western Europe and the Middle East are known as **guest workers**. In Europe, guest workers are protected by minimum wage laws, labor union contracts, and other support programs. Foreign-born workers comprise more than one-half of the labor force in Luxembourg; one-sixth in Switzerland; and one-tenth in Austria, Belgium, and Germany. About 700,000 immigrants enter Europe legally each year, plus an estimated 500,000 illegally.

Guest workers serve a useful role in Western Europe, because they take low-status and low-skilled jobs that local residents won't accept. In cities such as Berlin, Brussels, Paris, and Zurich, guest workers provide essential services, such as driving buses, collecting garbage, repairing streets, and washing dishes.

Although relatively low paid by European standards, guest workers earn far more than they would at home. The economy of the guest worker's native country also gains from the arrangement. By letting their people work elsewhere, poorer countries reduce their own unemployment problems. Guest workers also help their native countries by sending a large percentage of their earnings back home to their families. The injection of foreign currency then stimulates the local economy.

The United Kingdom severely restricts the ability of foreigners to obtain work permits. However, British policy is complicated by the legacy of the country's former worldwide empire. When some of the United Kingdom's former colonies were granted independence, residents there could choose between remaining British citizens and becoming citizens of the new country. Millions of former colonials in India, Ireland, Pakistan, and the West Indies retained their British citizenship and eventually moved to the United Kingdom. However, spouses and other family members who are citizens of the new countries do not have the right to come to Britain.

Most guest workers in Europe come from North Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia. Distinctive migration



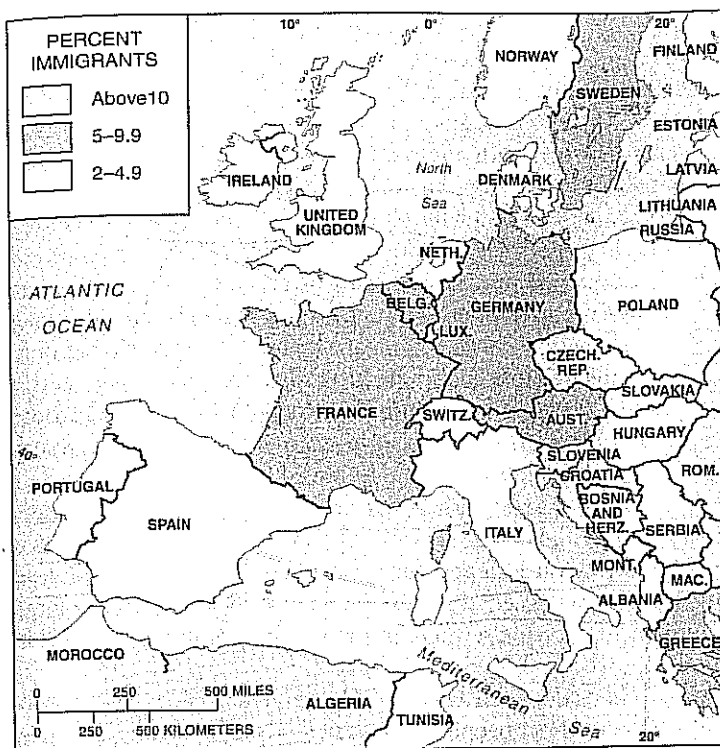
Doner Kebab stand in Hamburg, Germany. Turkish guest workers operate many restaurants in Germany that specialize in Middle Eastern food. A doner kebab consists of shaved roast meat placed inside a pita bread along with vegetables. Americans often refer to this as a gyro.

routes have emerged among the exporting and importing countries. Turkey sends a large number of guest workers to Northern Europe, especially to Germany as a result of government agreements. Three-quarters of a million Turks are employed in Germany, by far the largest movement of guest workers from one country to another within Europe. Many guest workers in France come from former French colonies in North Africa, such as Algeria and Morocco (Figure 3-9).

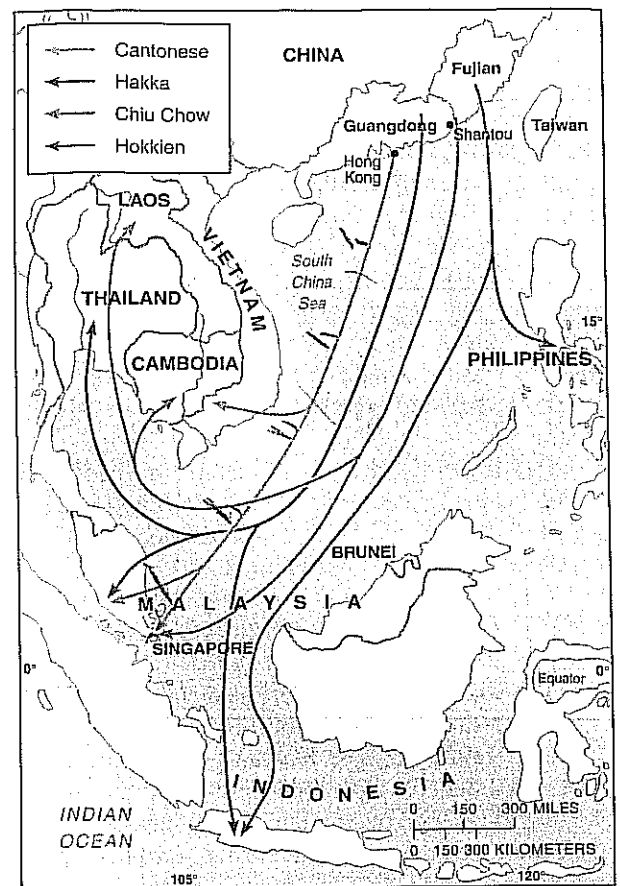
Time-Contract Workers

Millions of Asians migrated in the nineteenth century as time-contract laborers, recruited for a fixed period to work in mines or on plantations. When their contracts expired, many would settle permanently in the new country. Indians went as time-contract workers to Burma (Myanmar), Malaysia, British Guiana (present-day Guyana in South America), eastern and southern Africa, and the islands of Fiji, Mauritius, and Trinidad. Japanese and Filipinos went to Hawaii, and Japanese also went to Brazil. Chinese worked on the U.S. West Coast and helped build the first railroad to span the United States, completed in 1869.

More than 33 million ethnic Chinese currently live permanently in other countries, for the most part in Asia. Chinese comprise three-fourths of the population in Singapore, one-third in Malaysia, and one-tenth in Thailand. Most migrants were from southeastern China. Migration patterns vary among ethnic



**FIGURE 3-9** Guest workers in Europe. Guest workers emigrate primarily from Eastern Europe and North Africa to work in the wealthier, more developed countries of Western Europe. Guest workers follow distinctive migration routes. The selected country may be a former colonial ruler, have a similar language, or have an agreement with the exporting country.



**FIGURE 3-10** Emigration from China. Various ethnic Chinese peoples have distinctive streams of migration to other Asian countries. Most migrate to communities where other members of the same ethnic group have already established businesses. Most emigrate from Guangdong and Hokkien (Fujian) provinces.

groups of Chinese. Chiu Chowese migrate to Cambodia, Laos, and Singapore; Hakka to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand; and Hokkien to Indonesia and the Philippines (Figure 3-10).

In recent years, people have immigrated illegally in Asia to find work in other countries. Estimates of the number of illegal foreign workers in Taiwan range from 20,000 to 70,000. Most are Filipinos, Thais, and Malaysians who are attracted by employment in textile manufacturing, construction, and other industries. These immigrants accept half the pay demanded by Taiwanese, for the level is much higher than what they are likely to get at home, if they could even find employment.

## Distinguishing Between Economic Migrants and Refugees

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between migrants seeking economic opportunities and refugees fleeing from the persecution of an undemocratic government. Distinguishing between the two reasons has been especially difficult for emigrants from Cuba, Haiti, and Vietnam.

The distinction between economic migrants and refugees is important, because the United States, Canada, and Western European countries treat the two groups differently. Economic migrants are generally not admitted to these countries unless they possess special skills or have a close relative already there, and even then they must compete with similar applicants from other countries. However, refugees receive special priority in admission to other countries.

**EMIGRANTS FROM CUBA.** The U.S. government has regarded emigrants from Cuba as political refugees since the 1959 revolution that brought the Communist government of Fidel Castro to power. Under Castro's leadership, the Cuban government took control of privately owned banks, factories, and farms, and political opponents of the government were jailed. The U.S. government has prevented companies from buying and selling in Cuba, and Cuba has been excluded from cooperative organizations of Western Hemisphere countries.

In the years immediately following the revolution, more than 600,000 Cubans were admitted to the United States. The largest number settled in southern Florida, where they have become prominent in the region's economy and politics.

A second flood of Cuban emigrants reached the United States in 1980, when Fidel Castro suddenly decided to permit political prisoners, criminals, and mental patients to leave the country. More than 125,000 Cubans left within a few weeks to seek political asylum in the United States, a migration stream that became known as the "Mariel boatlift," named for the port from which the Cubans were allowed to embark.

To reach the United States, most crossed the 200-kilometer (125-mile) Straits of Florida in small boats, many of which were unseaworthy and capsized. When they learned about Castro's

new policy, many Cubans already living in Florida sailed from the United States to Cuba, found their relatives, and returned to Florida with them.

U.S. officials were unprepared for the sudden influx of Cuban immigrants. Most Cubans were processed at Key West, Florida, and transferred to camps. Officials identified families or social service agencies willing to sponsor the refugees. Sponsors were expected to provide food and shelter and help the people secure jobs. Most refugees quickly found sponsors, but several thousand who did not lived in army camps and temporary settlements. Approximately 1,000 inhabited Miami's Orange Bowl stadium until the start of the football season, when they were transferred to tents pitched under Interstate 95 in downtown Miami.

Beginning in 1987, the United States agreed to permit 20,000 Cubans per year to migrate to the United States. Cuba also agreed to the return of 2,500 criminals or mental patients who had come in the 1980 Mariel boatlift.

**EMIGRANTS FROM HAITI.** Shortly after the 1980 Mariel boatlift from Cuba, several thousand Haitians also sailed in small vessels for the United States. Under the dictatorship of François (Papa Doc) Duvalier (1957–71) and his son Jean-Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier (1971–86), the Haitian government persecuted its political opponents at least as harshly as did the Cuban government. But the U.S. government drew a distinction between the governments of the two neighboring Caribbean countries, because Castro was an ally of the Soviet Union.

Claiming that they had migrated for economic advancement rather than political asylum, U.S. immigration officials would not let the Haitians aboard the boats stay in the United States. However, the Haitians brought a lawsuit against the U.S. government, arguing that if the Cubans were admitted, they should be too. The government settled the case by agreeing to admit the Haitians.

After a 1991 coup that replaced Haiti's elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, with military leaders, thousands of Haitians fled their country. In boats that often were overcrowded and unseaworthy, they headed for the U.S. Guantánamo Bay naval base in southeastern Cuba, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) across the Windward Passage from Haiti. Although situated on Cuba, Guantánamo Bay naval base has been controlled by the United States for years.

Once safely ashore at Guantánamo, the Haitians could apply as refugees for migration to the U.S. mainland. Similarly, Haitians picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard from boats drifting in the Windward Passage were eligible to claim political asylum in the United States. U.S. Immigration officials recognized the claim of political persecution made by many of the Haitians, but the U.S. State Department decided that most left Haiti for economic rather than political reasons.

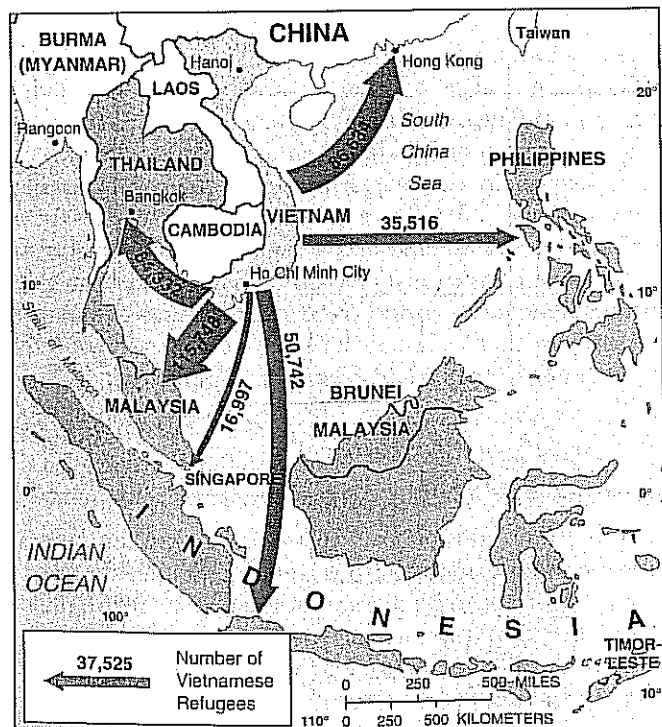
The United States invaded Haiti in 1994 to reinstate Aristide as president, and a year later, a United Nations peacekeeping force ensured democratic elections. Although political persecution has subsided, many Haitians still try to migrate to the United States, reinforcing the view that economic factors may always have been important in emigration from the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

**EMIGRANTS FROM VIETNAM.** The Vietnam War ended in 1975 when Communist-controlled North Vietnam captured South Vietnam's capital city of Saigon (since renamed Ho Chi Minh City). The United States, which had supported the government of South Vietnam, evacuated from Saigon several thousand people who had been closely identified with the American position during the war and who were, therefore, vulnerable to persecution after the Communist victory.

Thousands of other pro-U.S. South Vietnamese who were not politically prominent enough to get space on an American evacuation helicopter tried to leave by boat. Fleeing overland to neighboring Cambodia, China, and Laos was unattractive because of Communist domination or political unrest in those countries. The so-called boat people drifted into the South China Sea, hoping they would be saved by the U.S. Navy.

U.S. naval officers wished to save the boat people but hesitated because of U.S. law. Once taken on board, the boat people would technically be on U.S. territory and could apply for admission to the United States as refugees. This would be unfair to the large numbers of people elsewhere in the world, as well as those still in Vietnam, who had been waiting a long time for the U.S. government to consider their claims for admission as refugees. Consequently, some boat people were not allowed to board U.S. vessels.

A second surge of Vietnamese boat people began in the late 1980s. Their most popular destinations were Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Thailand, with smaller numbers sailing to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Singapore (Figure 3–11). As memories of the Vietnam War faded, officials in these countries no longer



**FIGURE 3–11** Destinations of Vietnamese boat people. During the 1970s, Vietnamese boat people were regarded as political refugees following the end of a long war. In recent years, neighboring countries have severely restricted the number of Vietnamese permitted to stay. Other countries have argued that the boat people can no longer make legitimate claims to be refugees from a war that ended back in 1975.